

Rebuilding Afghanistan's Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP)

ASSESSMENT OF RAMP TECHNOLOGY DIFFUSION PROGRAM

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1. Introduction

The success of RAMP is dependent upon getting farmers and other stakeholders adopting new practices. This Assessment paper looks at how RAMP can facilitate the diffusion of innovations to achieve the project's stated objectives in rebuilding Afghanistan's agricultural sector.

This Assessment will be implemented through or in association with job orders supporting the three technical components of RAMP – agricultural technology and market development, rural financial services and rural infrastructure rehabilitation – and the agricultural policy component. This paper will serve as a base for discussions with the RAMP team, USAID and job order partners on how best integrate the recommended communication support tasks in appropriate job orders.

2. Methodology

This Assessment was carried out by the Agricultural Communications Strategist in the following manner:

- **Studying project documents** – this included the contract, briefing papers, draft project strategies, draft work plans, etc.
- **Interviewing RAMP team members** – this included gathering information from the COP, DCOP and all the component team leaders. In each case, the discussion began with the goals their programs needed to achieve, what was being done and issues they felt should be addressed in this Assessment.
- **Discussions with job order contractors/bidders** – this included ICARDA, FAO, CADG and other groups. It also included sitting in on many RAMP meetings reviewing proposals from job order bidders.
- **Interviewing government partners** – several meetings were held with the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry (MAAH) officials involved in research, extension, communication and their new Information Management and Policy Unit.
- **Tour of rural areas** – with the leader of the RAMP Agricultural Technology and Market Development component, a one day field trip was made to the Shamali Plains which included interviews with farmers, input dealers, market buyers and other groups.

The information gathered was analyzed using the methodology coming from the Diffusion of Innovations research and Adoption Theory.

The first step was to identify the initial communication support tasks to be implemented which will give the quickest results for RAMP during this project focus I period. This paper focuses on these initial tasks. It is recommended that early next year the Assessment be reviewed, revised and additional tasks be added fitting into project focus II as described in the RAMP strategy paper.

3. Results Framework

The overall objectives of RAMP are:

- Increasing agricultural productivity and output
- Increasing rural incomes through effective linkages between producers, processors and markets

The RAMP contract states nation-wide benchmarks and results for these overall objectives and for the four program components. Examples of overall results indicators include 60% increase in total wheat production, \$250 million of increased sales of horticultural and livestock products, etc. The RAMP monitoring and evaluation component is also establishing additional indicators for the four program components breaking them down by year. Each job order also includes targets of performance and results.

The priority benchmarks and results will guide the design and implementation of the program support communications program described in this Assessment.

4. Initial Tasks

It is recommended that at this early stage of implementing the RAMP project there should be four initial program support communications tasks developed and implemented in association with job order subcontractors. These tasks are designed to get quick results during this start-up phase of RAMP. These include two core communications tasks and two support tasks:

- a. **Increasing Effectiveness of Farmer Demonstration Plots** – This core communication task directly supports the first RAMP objective “increasing agricultural productivity and outputs”. The focus is on creating farmer demonstration plots that effectively communicate best practices to other farmers and, where appropriate, to other stakeholder groups.
- b. **Establishing a Market Information System** – This core communication task directly supports the second RAMP objective “increasing rural incomes through effective linkages between producers, processors and markets.” The focus is on developing an effective market information system which serves farmers, processors, market buyers and other concerned groups.
- c. **Packaging Best Practices** – This support communication task addresses a critical problem in rebuilding the Afghanistan agricultural sector. During the past 20 years there has been almost no development of new agricultural technology in the country and what exists within the country or from outside has not been packaged into a form which can be communicated through intermediary groups (input dealers, extension workers, NGOs, market buyers, school teachers, etc.) to end-users – farmers, herders, orchard operators, vegetable growers, etc.
- d. **Better Understanding Farmers and Key Stakeholder Groups** – This support communication task also addresses a critical gap in rebuilding the Afghanistan agricultural sector. Little is known about the knowledge levels of best practices, attitudes towards them or the actual practices farmers are currently using and why. Little is known also on how farmers receive information on new practices and who actually influences farmers to change their practices. This is commonly called KAP (knowledge, attitude and practices) and information seeking studies. This task will

guide the development of specific communications campaigns in the various job orders.

These four tasks should be considered as a starting point. As job orders emerge there will be cases where specific communications campaigns will need to be designed and implemented to support that particular program. As the rural finance program emerges there will also be communication support activities designed and implemented in association with the MISFA/DAI technical assistance team. The RAMP strategy paper recommends that project focus II implementation move from supply-oriented to demand-oriented programs and job orders. As that change in programs take place new communication support tasks will be designed and implemented to support these new programs.

5. Task #1 – Increasing Effectiveness of Farmer Demonstration Plots

This task is designed to support and enhance the effectiveness of the first RAMP objective – Increasing Agricultural Production and Output. This involves getting producers (farmers) to adopt new practices which will increase their production and comply with market requirements at a cost effective level.

This initial core communication task will link with the FHCRAA/ICARDA Job Order, Demonstrating New Technologies in Farmers' Fields to Facilitate Rapid Adoption and Diffusion. It is envisioned that the methodology developed and tested through this job order will be shared and adapted with other job orders focusing on increased production, such as grapes, cotton, chickens, etc. This section (Task #1) builds upon and expands the Job Order prepared by FHCRAA/ICARDA focusing on how to make the farmer demonstration plots effective communication tools.

Research throughout the world has shown that farmers are the most important channel of communication influencing other farmers to adopt new practices. The most powerful diffusion tool developed by extension agencies is the “result demonstration plot” which is placed on farms. Therefore, this task is at the heart of increasing agriculture production. If the farmers aren't selected correctly or the demonstration plots are not set up correctly, this program could fail and even set back the adoption process. It is essential that technical specialists work closely with extension specialists and agricultural communicators to ensure this program is successfully implemented.

- a. **Key Stakeholders and Their Roles** – This task is based upon years (beginning in 1935) of work done throughout the world by rural sociologists and other groups to understand the diffusion of innovations and the adoption process. Building upon this rich diffusion of innovations knowledge base, the following stakeholder groups will be involved in this communication task supporting the farmer demonstration plots:
 - **Farmers** – diffusion of innovations research has shown that farmers have the greatest influence on getting other farmers to adopt new best practices. This is why farmer demonstration plots are being used. Farmers seek advice and information from other farmers and if they can see the results in their neighbor's field it is even more powerful. In the diffusion process, the third stage is “trial” where farmers will test a best practice in a small area of their farm. The demonstration plots on neighbor's farms often can serve as this trial phase for other farmers.

- **Input dealers** – in most cases, the second most important source of information for farmers are the input dealers – seed, fertilizer, chemicals, animal feed, veterinary supplies, etc. When farmers are buying their inputs, this is the “most teachable moment” with farmers seeking information and advice on how to use these inputs. This means that the input dealers and their salesmen must understand the recommended best practices related to their products.
 - **Other local influential groups** – farmers can receive information and be influenced by a number of local groups, such as market buyers, processors, local leaders, school teachers, religious leaders, etc. More needs to be known on which of these groups are the most important that farmers seek or receive information and what is their creditability and believability – which groups have the greatest influence on farmers..
 - **Mass media** – the diffusion process research has found that mass media plays a unique role. It is generally very effective in the awareness stage (first stage of the diffusion process) where it can reach large numbers of people at low cost and make them aware of new best practices. The research has shown, however, that as target groups go through the diffusion process towards the adoption stage, mass media is less effective and interpersonal communications becomes the primary communication channel. The adoption stage requires two way communications with influential people. This explains why the above three stakeholder groups must be involved in this program as they are the interpersonal channels of communications to farmers.
 - **Research and Extension Agencies** – while at the current time the agricultural research and extension agencies in Afghanistan are very weak, it is essential they be involved in this demonstration program so that in the future they can continue operating the program. The research staff should work with ICARDA to create information packages for the recommended best practices so that this information can be shared widely to other groups who are also working with farmers. The regional research stations and extension staffs need to be involved to help implement the demonstration program and in the process to strengthen their capabilities. Extension personnel will be used to help establish the demonstration plots, monitor what the participating farmers do in maintaining the plots and help organize field days. There needs to be a two-way flow of information between the researchers, the sources of best practices, and farmers who are the ultimate users of the best practices.
- b. **Criteria for Selecting Demonstration Farms** – It is critical that the correct farmers are selected to participate in this demonstration program.
- **Production potential** – the farm must represent a typical farm in the area in terms of soil type, water availability and other agronomic conditions to ensure that if best practices are followed the production results will be good. At the same time, these conditions must not be far superior to that of other farms in the area. Farmers normally are very good at judging if the demonstration plot results will work on their farms.
 - **Location** – it is essential that the farm and demonstration plots be located next to a road where large numbers of farmers regularly pass by. Signs will be posted to ensure that neighboring farmers understand what the plots are demonstrating so they can observe what is happening throughout the growing season. They should also be located so that it is easy to transport farmers, input dealers and other influential groups for field days.

- **Farmer credibility and innovativeness** – the farmers selected must be respected by their neighbors and be local opinion leaders. In the diffusion literature they are referred to as being “early adopters” who are just far enough ahead of the majority of farmers to be recognized as being leaders. (The true “innovators” who are the first to try new practices often are thought of as being crack pots, being too far ahead of the majority, and therefore are often not respected by other farmers.)
 - **Farmer’s communication skills** – the farmers selected to have the demonstration plots must be willing and able to communicate to others what best practices they are using and demonstrate the results. This also means that the teams working with these farmers must be sure to explain what is being done and why. A major part of the communication with other farmers will be done throughout the growing season when farmers stop at the demonstration plot and ask the host farmer questions. The participating farmers must be prepared for and be willing to engage in this continuous communication. Field days are only part of the communication outreach program.
- c. **Communication Activities to Enhance the Effectiveness of Demonstration Plots** – The farmer demonstration plots can serve as a base or platform for a multidimensional communication program to farmers and other key stakeholder groups. The following are some of communications activities that should be integrated into the farmer demonstration program:
- **Identification of the plots** – this involves preparing and posting signs identifying the plots and the various best practices being used, such as varieties, seeding rate, fertilizer types and rates, weed control, etc.
 - **Displays/posters describing the best practices** – where appropriate, there should be displays or posters giving more information on the best practices and why they are important. These posters can also be posted at local input dealers, market centers and other locations where farmers visit.
 - **Briefing sheets for giving to influential groups** – best practices fact sheets should be prepared describing the best practices being used which should be given to influential groups (such as input dealers, teachers, extension agents, etc.) and to literate farmers. These fact sheets could be given out at field days and other times.
 - **Farmer field days** – one or more field days for farmers should be organized during the growing season and near harvest time. These should be publicized with posters and possibly by radio to attract the largest number of farmers to participate. Transport for visiting farmers and refreshments should be provided.
 - **Stakeholder and influential group field days and briefings** – it is also recommended that a special field day be organized for groups such supply input dealers, market buyers, extension agents, teachers, media representatives and other influential groups. They would be provided additional information and be encouraged to promote the best practices to farmers. During this field day they would be given the fact sheets on the best practices so that they have sufficient information to communicate to farmers.
 - **Yield results fact sheets for media and influential groups** – at harvest time the yields need to be recorded, the information packaged and disseminated to others. This could be done with posters at the demonstration site and other locations in the community. Fact sheets summarizing the results need to be prepared and disseminated to influential groups and to local radio stations.

d. **Work Plan** – The following lists the major steps in implementing this communication support program:

- **Secure correct supply inputs** – it is essential that the correct supply inputs are provided to the participating farmers. If this is not done then the communication program will be ineffective and the demonstration plots could fail.
- **Enlist participating farmers and brief them on their responsibilities** – working with the community leaders and participating extension agents, using the criteria listed above, recruit farmers who will provide the land and labor for the demonstration plots, and will be effective communicators to other farmers.
- **Prepare the identification signs and educational posters** – these will be installed at the time of planting the demonstration plots. These should be large enough and be placed so that farmers and others coming by on the road can read the signs. There should be space at the edge of road so people can stop and look at the plots.
- **Prepare best practices fact sheets** – these are fact sheets summarizing the best practices and answering questions which farmers may have. These will be disseminated during the field days and used in many other ways with influential groups who will communicate the information to farmers.
- **Train participating extension workers** – training needs to be done for the extension workers who are involved in helping select farmers, set up the demonstration plots, monitor what the farmer does and help organize field days. The extension workers need to be carefully selected and trained on the best practices and on how to work with the farmers who are hosting the demonstration plots. The training should include some actual meetings with farmers so their performance can be evaluated – both technical content and relationships with farmers.
- **Brief/train the participating farmers on the best practices being used** – the participating farmers will need to be trained on the best practices being demonstrated including the importance of their following basic instructions in order to ensure good results. The participating farmers need to be prepared so that they can answer questions other farmers may ask them.
- **Establish the demonstration plots and monitor their progress** – working with the participating farmers and local extension agents, lay out the demonstration plots, oversee the planting and other best practices, and plan the schedule of events for the entire cropping season.
- **Monitor the demonstration plot implementation** – throughout the growing season the ICARDA field team need to repeatedly check on what the participating farmers are doing to implement the best practices and ensure that the recommended practices are working correctly. In most cases this will be done by the participating extension workers who should keep a log book on what was done, how many farmers visited the demonstration plots, yields, and other information. If there are problems with a demonstration plot immediate corrective actions need to be taken explaining to the farmer what has to be done. In extreme cases where the problem can not be corrected the demonstration plot should be terminated. A failed demonstration plot can set back the diffusion of best practices to other farmers.
- **Explore identifying local village motivators** – in some areas there are local leaders who can serve as motivators encouraging farmers to visit the demonstration plots and relaying information on the best practices being used. The team working with the participating farmers should be on the look out for potential village motivators who could be a school teacher, religious leader, NGO, etc.

- **Monitor the on-going passerby and visitor communication with participating farmers** – when visiting the participating farmers ask them for estimates of how many people have looked at the demonstration plots and how many have asked questions or wanted more information. The participating extension workers should put this information into their log books.
 - **Organize farmer field days at appropriate times during the growing season** – the schedule of events should determine if there will be one or more field days. This will be determined by how best to show off the recommended practices. One should be near to harvest time so other farmers can see the yield results. The farmer field days will be promoted in the region with posters and, where appropriate, through radio.
 - **Organize briefing field days for input dealers and other influential groups** – field days should be organized for special influential groups such as input dealers, market buyers, teachers, mass media representatives, etc. These field days need to be promoted with handbill announcements, invitations, etc. directed to the targeted influential groups.
 - **Prepare fact sheets summarizing yields and other successes** – when the plots are harvested, the yields should be recorded and the information put into fact sheets. Other successes in demonstrating the best practices should be recorded and put into the fact sheets – a summary of what was accomplished, when, etc. These fact sheets should be disseminated to influential groups, media, etc. There should also be posters at the demonstration plot site giving the yield information.
 - **Decide what is to be done the following year** – it should be decided at the end of the cropping season what farmer will be asked to host demonstration plots the following year. In most cases, new farmers in different locations should be recruited in order to expand the knowledge base and spread the best practices to more farmers.
- e. **Resource Needs/Budget** – The following budget items may need to be added to the FHCRAA/ICARDA farmer demonstration job order. The actual cost information will have to be developed based upon the number of plots and available cost information.
- Signs for identifying the demonstration plots and best practices
 - Displays/posters describing the best practices
 - Briefing fact sheets on the best practices (production, printing & distribution)
 - Promoting farmer field days (posters, radio, etc.)
 - Transportation for bringing farmers to field days and other costs (maybe food, drink, etc.)
 - Promoting field days for special influential groups (handbills, invitations, etc.)
 - Conducting the field days for influential groups (refreshments, etc.)
 - Yield fact sheets and posters

The cost for ICARDA staff time and participating extension workers for recruiting the farmers and establishing the demonstration plots is already included in the FHCRAA/ICARDA job order.

- f. **Next Steps to be Taken by RAMP Related to Initial Task #1** – This program support communication strategy is being developed after some of the job orders are being processed. In other cases, job order bidders can be informed about this task and be given the guidelines. The head of the RAMP Agricultural Technology and Market Development will be responsible for this communication support task. The RAMP job order task officers will serve as the direct liaison with the contractors and monitor what is

being done. The RAMP Communication Support Unit will provide assistance as needed and help identify communications expertise the contractors may use. The RAMP team needs to do the following:

- **Integrating the guidelines into the ICARD job order** – working with USAID and ICARDA, determine how these communication activities can be integrated into the job order subcontract with ICARDA. It will have to be determined if additional funds need to be put into the budget. RAMP will provide special advisory assistance and training to ICARDA job order teams.
 - **Guidelines for upcoming job order bidders/contractors** – a generic version of the Task #1 will be prepared as a checklist to be given to appropriate groups who are preparing proposals for upcoming job orders. It should be explained to them that these approaches and activities need to be integrated into their job order proposals, including the budget requirements.
 - **Provide Ministry the guidelines** – the generic version will be translated into Dari for the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry (MAAH) teams who are creating the provincial farmer demonstration plots. This would be part of their capability building program. The translated guidelines should also be shared with job order bidders/contractors.
 - **Field an extension methods/farmer demonstration consultant to advise and train contractors** -- bring in a short-term consultant to work with ICARDA, other groups preparing job orders, and the MAAH. The consultant would be a specialist in community participation and extension methods. He/she will be fielded at the same time as the packaging best practices consultant who should be an overseas Afghan with an agricultural background and technical writing skills. The two will work together with the contractors. A scope of work will be prepared for the extension methods/farmer demonstration consultant.
- g. **Task #1 Target for 2004 Project Year** -- The target is to get all appropriate job order contractors to use the guidelines for establishing farmer demonstration plots.

6. Task #2 – Establishing a Market Information System

This core task is designed to support and enhance the effectiveness of the second RAMP objective – Increasing rural incomes through effective linkages between producers, processors and markets. The goal is to provide market price information to farmers so they can determine how best to sell their commodities and to ensure they are receiving fair prices.

The most important information for farmers is weather and market prices. This communication support task will be focusing on providing to farmers relevant and timely market information. The general approach will be combining community market boards with radio broadcasts. This task will be linked to the rehabilitating or renovating community market centers/farm storage facilities under the RAMP project in the Rural Infrastructure Rehabilitation component for the construction of the community market boards.

This task will also be linked to the FAO sponsored Information Management and Policy Unit in the MAAH, which is planning to collect market price data and is operating 160 agricultural metrological stations around the country. It will also be linked to RAMP job orders involved

in rehabilitation or constructing market centers and those job orders that are generating market information or need market information.

a. **Key Stakeholders and Their Roles** – The following groups will be involved in this core communication support task:

- **Farmers** – the ultimate beneficiaries for this task are farmers. The market centers with market boards need to be located so farmers will make maximum use of them. More will have to be learned about what type of market information farmers want and can use. Some thought will have to be given on how to communicate market information to farmers who are illiterate. (Possibly using pictures of commodities on market boards rather than the words.)
- **Market buyers, processors and input dealers** – the market centers will be the focal points where farmers bring their commodities and where market buyers assemble. They also will attract input dealers and processors who want to interact with farmers. Therefore, the RAMP assisted market centers could become community agricultural centers for marketing and technology transfer.
- **Collectors of market prices** – a system needs to be developed of how to collect the market prices, document the information and disseminate it to farmers and other concerned groups. Once it is determined which markets information should be collected from and what commodities market price information is needed, then a person will have to be recruited to gather the price information and disseminate it. It will have to be determined if there are organizations who will collect the price information. Market data collection is normally a public sector function. Therefore, discussions need to be held with MAAH and possibly other public agencies to determine the home base for this program.
- **Community market board coordinators** – in each market center that has a market price board, a person will have to be identified who will maintain the board and keep price information up to date. AQIP project established 10 community market boards and worked with the communities to identify the person responsible for maintaining the board and keeping the prices information up-to-date. This task will draw upon the AQIP experience.
- **Radio stations** – in many countries, radio plays a major role in disseminating market information to farmers. However, at this time the coverage of Afghan radio stations is not good enough in the rural areas (24% rural population covered) for radio to be the sole source of market information. Therefore, until radio coverage expands there will be a need to use village market boards and other means for communicating market information to farmers and other interested groups. Where coverage is available, radio can provide market information directly to farmers as well as to the community market board coordinators.
- **FAO VHS two-way radio** – FAO is in the process of establishing two-way radio links with the agriculture offices in the 32 provinces. Further discussions with FAO are needed to determine if these VHF radio links can be used for collecting market price information and to communicate market price information to the community market board coordinators.
- **RAMP job order contractors** – an inventory of the job orders will have to be made to determine which can be linked to this market reporting program. This would include job orders related to rehabilitating or constructing community market centers. It will also include job orders that would be generating market information and those who need market information.

- b. **Constraints** – At the current time there is no wide spread market information system in place. There are some small programs getting market information to farmers. For example, the AQIP project established 10 community market boards. An inventory of other programs – NGOs, market buyers, etc. – needs to be conducted to build upon their experience and link them to this program. Based upon the limited knowledge available, there appears to be some constraints that need to be addressed:
- **Market price information gathering** – a considerable amount of work will be needed to establish a system of market price collection and determining who will be responsible for collecting and disseminating the information. It will have to be determined how these people will be paid and what organizations they will work for.
 - **Maintaining the community market boards and keeping the information up-to-date** – it is planned to have community market centers rehabilitated or constructed through the RAMP project. Most of these centers should include a market board. Other market centers that have high volume should also have market boards. A system needs to be developed for identifying the people who will maintain the boards and keep the price information up-to-date. It will also have to be determined how these people will be paid and what organization should they work for.
 - **Radio coverage** – according to a 2003 Internews radio analysis, only 24% of the rural population is currently within the coverage of Afghanistan radio stations. This analysis was done by comparing the radio stations' footprints with UN population data for the 320 districts in the country. Out of the total rural population of 16.3 million, only 3.9 million people are within a local radio station footprint at the current time. There are currently 20 additional radio stations being set up which should be operational within the next year. It is not known how much additional coverage there will be in the rural areas. Therefore, with the limited current coverage, innovative ways will have to be found to get the market information to farmers.
 - **Coordination with and among job orders** – a number of job orders either generate market information or need market price information. Others will be awarded to groups who will be rehabilitating or constructing market centers. These will have to be identified and mechanisms developed to coordinate what they contribute to this communication support task.
- c. **Recommended Approach** – The following are the key elements of this communication task that are known at this time. This program is going to have to emerge by testing different approaches, making adjustments, and gradually finding the best techniques to use.
- **Market centers** – until radio becomes more wide spread in the rural areas, the market boards in the market centers will be important. The market boards should be included in the rehabilitation or construction of the market centers.
 - **Work with communities to identify the commodities and markets** – where market boards are located, it will



be important to work with the community to identify what markets they want information from, what commodities to include on the board during the different seasons, and identify a local person who will maintain the board and keep the price information up-to-date, and what training this person needs. This information from the communities will guide the design of the market price information collection program.

- **Engage radio stations and train their personnel** – when the program is designed, all the Afghanistan radio stations will be contacted and asked to participate in the program. Their staff will be trained on how to report market price information. The stations should be encouraged to use the market information as it will help them build audience in the rural areas. They should also be encouraged to broadcast agricultural weather reports (temperature, rain fall, etc.) and farm news and information. Mechanisms will have to be developed on how to disseminate the market price information to the radio stations. Decisions will have to be made on what markets information will be disseminated to each station based upon what commodities are most important to farmers in their coverage area.
- **Monitor program and make adjustments** – the overall program will be monitored including the construction of the market boards, community needs assessments, collecting market price information, disseminating the information to appropriate partners, maintenance and up-dating community market boards, and how farmers use the information. Based upon this monitoring process, adjustments will be made to the program to make it more effective.
- **Market price information database** – an organization will have to be identified (possibly the MAAH Information Management and Policy Unit, which is supported by FAO) who will collect the market price information and keep in a central database so that longitudinal records are available of prices by location, commodity and dates. This same organization will also be responsible for disseminating the market information to radio stations, community market board coordinators and other groups.

d. **Work Plan/Steps for Implementation** – The following activities will be carried out to implement this communication support task:

- **Market board designs** – a uniform design is needed for the market boards. One side should contain market price information and the other side be used as a community information board and for RAMP to post educational materials. Blank lines need to be included so that communities can add commodities to fit their specific needs and for different seasons.
- **Community needs assessment** – as the market boards are constructed, meetings with the community leaders will be conducted to determine what markets they want information from, what commodities price information is needed, and to identify a local person to maintain the boards and up-date the price information.
- **Train community market board coordinators** – once the market board coordinators are identified they will receive training on what the market information means and why important to farmers, how to keep the price information up-to-date, and how they can promote the use of the boards by farmers, market buyers, and other interested groups. Prior to this training, the mechanisms must be developed on how the market prices information will be communicated to these market board coordinators.

- **Identify and train market information collectors** – once the markets are identified where information is to be collected, a person or group will be identified who will collect the information. This will include designing forms which they will fill in and how they will communicate the information to the central organization.
 - **Establish the mechanisms for communicating market price information** – a system will have to be designed for communicating market price information to the community market board coordinators and where possible to farmers, market buyers and other users. Mechanisms will also have to be designed for disseminating the information to radio stations.
 - **Monitor implementation of the program** – all aspects of the program needs to be monitored and problems/constraints identified and adjustments made to make the program more effective.
- e. **Resource Needs/Budget** – The following are items which need to be budgeted for:
- **Market boards** – the cost for these boards need to be included in the Rural Infrastructure Rehabilitation component job orders related to rehabilitating or constructing community market centers.
 - **Cost of collecting market price information** – it will have to be determined if an organization or individuals are contracted to collect market price information and if they are paid. This will have to be done in a way that is sustainable after the RAMP project finishes.
 - **Cost of maintaining community market boards and keep price information up-to-date** – it will also have to be determined if an organization or individuals will be contracted to maintain the community market boards and if they will be paid. Again, this will have to be done in a way that is sustainable after the RAMP project finishes.
 - **Establishing a central market database/information clearinghouse** – a central organization will have to be identified to be the engine for this program. They need to establish a database for archiving the market price information and publishing reports. This central organization will become the focal point for collecting and disseminating market price information. The FAO supported MAAH Information Management and Policy Unit is a possible organization to serve this function.
 - **Communication costs** – mechanisms will have to be established on communicating market price information to community market boards, radio stations and other concerned groups. In some cases, radio stations may ask RAMP to pay for the air time. This should be discouraged and RAMP not pay for the air time as it will mean the program is not sustainable after RAMP completes. The radio stations should be told that this type of public service information will help build their rural audiences which will make the time more attractive to commercial sponsors.
 - **Training participants** – this will include the people who will be collecting market price information, the community market board coordinators, radio station personnel and the staff of the central market information clearinghouse.
- f. **Next Steps to be Taken by RAMP Related to Task #2** –The long-term RAMP Agribusiness Advisor will be responsible for this communication support task. The RAMP Communication Support Unit will provide assistance, particularly in developing the radio component of this task and help identify communications expertise that may be needed. Since there is little experience in Afghanistan on establishing market price information programs, the RAMP team needs to do the following to get this program established:

- **Integrate community market board construction into Rural Infrastructure Rehabilitation component** – it will be necessary that all job order proposals for building or renovating community market centers include constructing and installing market boards. This will be closely coordinated with the work being done, especially in the marketing program, by the RAMP Agriculture Technology and Market Development component.
- **Inventory of what other groups are doing with market information** – information needs to be collected on what private sector groups, donors, international organizations, NGOs, and other groups who are involved in market price information programs. It is essential to identify what data they are collecting and what is being done with the information. Their programs need to be studied and their lessons learned need to be collected to help design this program.
- **Inventory of job orders** – working with the RAMP contracts team, look at the job orders and concept papers to see where there may be links with this program. This includes job orders related to rehabilitation or construction of community market centers and those which generate or need market price information. It should then be determined how these job orders can be linked to this program.
- **Determine what organization will be the focal point for this program** – it is important to identify an organization which will provide the leadership for this program and will continue to operate it in the future. This organization will oversee the collection and dissemination of the market price information. It will also maintain the central database and serve as a market price information clearinghouse. Since this will most likely be a public organization, the MAAH should be involved in this decision making process. A possible organization could be the MAAH Information Management and Policy Unit which is supported by FAO. Their program, which is just beginning to be developed, includes collecting market price information. The mechanisms will have to be developed to ensure that whatever organization that is selected the program will be sustainable.
- **Decide if a special job order is needed for this task** – once the inventory of job orders is analyzed, then decide if a special job order needs to be created to design and implement this market price information program. This will also be related to what central organization is identified to operate this program over the long-term, and if they need technical assistance and other support to be able to establish and maintain the program. The central organization will most likely be public sector.
- **Develop a plan for ensuring sustainability of this program** – this will include the funding of the central organization past the life of RAMP, how to ensure market price information collectors continue, and the same for the community market board coordinators.
- **Engage market information consultant** – it is recommended that a specialist in establishing market information systems be hired as a short term consultant to help in the design of this program. This consultant would be fielded the first and third quarters of 2004 to help identify the focal point organization, prepare a job order contract, and guide the establishment of the market price information system. The consultant should have experience in countries such as Afghanistan where a functioning market information systems need to be created. A scope of work will be prepared for this consultant.

- g. **Task #2 Targets for 2004 Project Year** -- The targets are (1) 125 market price boards will be constructed and (2) a focal point group identified and contract issued for developing and overseeing the market information system.

7. Task #3 – Packaging Best Practices

This support communication task addresses the issue, “what information should be communicated to farmers?” During the past 20 years there has been almost no development of agricultural technology in the country. The new technology that has been generated inside Afghanistan or brought in from outside has not been packaged into a form which can be communicated through intermediary groups (input dealers, market buyers, and other influential groups) who will communicate the best practices to farmers. The goal of this task is to begin to develop a package of best practices fact sheets containing relevant and accurate information to be communicated to farmers.

Information is a commodity which can be packaged in different ways for various types of groups. Since illiteracy is high in the rural areas, much of the communication to farmers will be done through interpersonal (face-to-face) communications and possibly through radio. It is important to develop best practices fact sheets for the intermediary groups who will be communicating the information to farmers. This is called the “Wholesale-Retail Model of Technology Diffusion.” The best practices fact sheets are the wholesale information packages which the intermediary groups will verbally communicate at the retail level to farmers.

The term “fact sheet” is a generic term for brief printed materials – generally one or two pages in length – on specific subjects that will be used by the job order field teams and other groups for providing information to influential groups for communicating to farmers. Fact sheets are generally done in multiple languages—the primary languages of the intermediary groups and, if needed, English for the international community. Fact sheets are generally the starting point for identifying and developing messages for a project program support communication program. Once the fact sheets are prepared and approved, it is then easy to produce other communication materials and programs such as field days, farmer meetings, radio programs, posters, training materials, etc. The fact sheets assure that the basic messages are the same in these other communication programs/materials and that the facts are technically correct.

- a. **Stakeholders and User Groups** – This section identifies the stakeholder groups who will be responsible for producing the best practices fact sheets and the influential groups who could use the fact sheets. The following are the stakeholders:
- **Job order technical teams** – any job order that contains elements related to generating best practices or communicating them to farmers and other stakeholder groups need to generate best practices fact sheets. This needs to be put into the job order contracts. The technical specialists on the job order teams will be responsible to ensuring the technical information is correct.

- **Technical communication teams** – the job order contractors will need to use technical writers and graphics specialists to work with their technical specialists to produce the fact sheets and pre-test them. A short term RAMP consultant will work with these teams providing a template to follow and give them advice and, if needed, training.

The following groups are potential users of the best practices fact sheets:

- **Job order contractor field teams** – the first use of the best practices fact sheets will be the job order contractor field program teams. They will be responsible for working with various intermediary groups who will use the information to communicate to farmers.
- **Other donor project teams** – it is important that the fact sheets are shared with other RAMP job order contractors and with projects of other donor agencies who are dealing with the same best practices. The goal of the fact sheets is to ensure that the correct information is communicated to farmers.
- **Influential groups at the community level** – the job order contractors and other users of the fact sheets need to identify all the key influential groups at the community level who can become channels of communication to farmers. These could include supply input dealers, market buyers, school teachers, local leaders, and other opinion leaders who can influence farmers to adopt the best practices.
- **Field workers** – these would be the agricultural extension workers and field personnel from other ministries such as irrigation, rural development, etc.
- **Mass media representatives** – the best practices fact sheets should also be provided to mass media representatives, along with training, who can integrate the information into the programs for farmers. The key mass media for communicating to Afghanistan farmers is currently radio. However, the print media can be important for communicating to influential groups such as input dealers, market buyers, political leaders, etc.

b. Purpose of Fact Sheets – Producing best practices fact sheets achieves two primary purposes:

- **Securing a consensus on the message** – for a specific best practice, a fact sheet puts all the relevant facts onto paper so it can be reviewed for technical content, policy and political appropriateness, its relevance for the intended audience – farmers – and the goals of the RAMP program. It is essential to get approvals before other materials (such as radio programs, posters, and field days) on this subject are produced. Fact sheets are the basic information source for producing other communication materials and programs. Getting a consensus of the exact messages a job order is to relay can be a difficult process. Producing fact sheets forces all parties to come to agreement what is the message.
- **Disseminating to intermediary groups** – the reason for producing fact sheets is to ensure that all participating groups are relaying the same messages. Fact sheets provide intermediary groups with information which they can integrate into their programs and communicate to farmers. Therefore, with fact sheets it more likely these intermediary groups will be relaying to farmers the recommended best practices and the information will be accurate. Fact sheets should be the beginning step in putting together information that can be used for training programs and all the various communication programs in the job order.

c. **Guidelines for Preparing Best Practices Fact Sheets** – The following are recommended steps job order contractors should use in producing best practices fact sheets:

- **Select the subjects** – one of the most important tasks is to identify the subjects which fact sheets will be prepared. The subjects must fit the priority messages for the job order. The subjects should be specific so that it can be put into a page or two with graphics or photographs included. A series of fact sheets can be prepared for a general subject. A “subject tree” needs to be prepared with multiple sub boxes under each main subject. Each box should represent a subject which a fact sheet is to be prepared. As you go down the subject tree the topics become more detailed on a specific subject. It is important that each fact sheet ***covers one specific subject which contains a single recommended best practice or theme.*** If a fact sheet contains too much information it needs to either be simplified or broken into two or more fact sheets. Fact sheets produced by RAMP job order contractors can be on technical subjects (such as insect control recommendations) or on extension processes (such as how to organize a field day).
- **Establish the production team** – once the subjects are identified the job order contractor needs to assemble a team to produce the fact sheets. The team must include a technical specialist, technical writer (who has some understanding of the subject) and a graphics specialist. The team leader is normally a technical writer who is responsible for ensuring the intermediary groups using the fact sheets can understand the information and it contains all the information they need. The technical specialist is responsible for ensuring the information is technically correct. The graphics specialist is responsible for pictures, drawings and charts to help better explain the messages and ensure the layout is pleasing and professional.
- **Prepare draft fact sheets** – the production team should determine the titles for individual fact sheets, write the copy, select the visuals and prepare one or more layouts.
- **Pre-test draft fact sheets** – it is recommended that the draft fact sheets be tested on some of the target intermediary groups who will be using them. The main thing to test is their understanding of the fact sheet. If you have multiple layouts they should also be tested. It is also a good idea to test the title for the fact sheet to make sure it is interesting and communicates the theme you want. Also, make sure to find out if there is any additional information they need.
- **Secure approvals** – before the fact sheets are put into final form for printing they must be checked for technical accuracy and, in some cases, policy appropriateness. This might involve outside technical specialists to check the draft fact sheets. The job order leader should do the final approval once he/she is sure that they are technically accurate, policy issues are not a problem and that they are understood by the target intermediary user groups.
- **Prepare camera-ready copy and print** – once the approvals are received, the fact sheet will be finalized and printed. The RAMP technical team needs to be consulted to determine how many copies of the fact sheets need to be produced, and in what languages. The RAMP Communication Support Unit can assist with this step in recommending firms that can do this job.
- **Dissemination by job order contractor** – the contractor needs to have a dissemination plan for each of the best practices fact sheets. They can be disseminated to the intermediary groups directly or through briefing meetings or training.

- **RAMP archive and disseminate to other groups** – electronic and hard copies of all the best practices fact sheets need to be given to the RAMP team who will put them into the project library/information clearinghouse, post them on the RAMP Internet site and disseminate copies to other groups to use.
- d. **Guidelines on Selecting Subjects** – One of the hardest tasks is selecting the subjects for best practices fact sheets. It is recommended that fact sheets be prepared on all the major subjects/recommendations/issues the job order wants to communicate through intermediary groups to farmers. As mentioned above, it is recommended that a "subject tree" be prepared identifying subjects where fact sheets will be prepared. For example, the top of the subject tree could reflect the overall goals of the job order. This could be followed by one fact sheet summarizing each of the subcomponents. Under each subcomponent there could be a series of subjects at the next layer explaining the process and specific recommendations. There are several criteria for selecting subjects that need to be taken into consideration:
- **Relevance to farmers** – the subjects selected should reflect the information needs of the target farmers. There may have to be more than one fact sheet prepared on the same subjects if the recommendations vary by agro-climatic zones or for other reasons. It is important to understand what questions farmers will have on the best practices.
 - **Information needs of intermediary groups** – it is important to have a good idea of who will be the involved intermediary groups. You must assess the subjects and types of information needed to make sure they understand the technical and extension processes.
 - **Availability of relevant and accurate information** – it is essential that there is accurate and relevant information available on the best practices. The fact sheets serve as the repository for the information on the best practices.
 - **Subject can be explained in two pages** – the subject for each fact sheet should be specific enough to be clearly explained in two pages printed on one sheet of paper. If it can't be done, then break the subject into sub topics which can be explained in the space available on a fact sheet. Normally fact sheets longer than two pages contain too many details or are too broad to address specific concerns of farmers.
- e. **Organizing the Information** – Before beginning to write the fact sheet, the production team should create the following outline:
- **Overall key point** – this is the overall point which you want to get across to the reader of this fact sheet. This point should be put into the "highlighted summary box" as explained in the next section.
 - **Supporting points** – identify no more than four or five bullets giving the key supporting information to the main point. These bullets could be put in the "The Facts in Summary" described below.
 - **Questions farmers have** – identify what questions farmers will be asking the intermediary groups. It is important to include this information in the fact sheets so the intermediary groups can answer the farmers' questions.
 - **Identify appropriate visuals** – from the beginning, the team needs to begin identifying possible graphics, photographs, charts or other visuals that should be used in the fact sheet to support explaining the subject and add interest. Readers tend to look first at the visuals and then if they are interested they will read the writing. Therefore, the visuals are very important and must attract the attention of the reader and contribute to their understanding of the subject.

- f. **Suggested Outline for Best Practices Fact Sheets** – The following is a suggested outline for best practices fact sheets. This outline might vary to fit the specific job order needs, audiences, subjects, and how the information is used. In most cases, the fact sheet should be on one sheet of paper printed on both sides.
- **Series title** – should be interesting and fit the overall theme of the job order.
 - **Fact sheet title** – should be descriptive of the best practice being recommended, interesting and where possible show the benefit.
 - **Summary of key point highlighted** – a summary of the message stressing the positive benefit or why important should be in a box with larger font somewhere prominent in the layout on the front page so that it attracts the attention of the reader and sets the stage for reading the fact sheet.
 - **Main body with key and supporting points** – The body of the main message—maybe 2/3s of a page in length—should include briefly information about:
 - a. what it is
 - b. why important/benefit
 - c. summary how done (if relevant)
 - d. who involved (if relevant)
 - e. when (if relevant)
 - **Questions farmers may ask** – a series of questions with brief answers should be included. These should be questions which farmers would have and need to be addressed by the intermediary groups. It gives the fact sheet credibility and allows including relevant information in a brief form. It is essential to prepare the intermediary groups to be able to respond to farmers' questions.
 - **How to effectively communicate this information to farmers** – in some cases it is important to give the intermediary groups suggestions in the fact sheet on how they can communicate the best practices to farmers. This could include how to organize farm demonstration plots, field days, and other extension methods.
 - **The facts in summary** – if appropriate and space is available, the last section should contain bullets stating the primary facts you want the reader to remember.
 - **Where to get more information** – at the bottom on the back page should be a section which names the technical specialist who provided the information and how to contact him/her for additional information.
 - **Date** – at the bottom of the back page should be the date prepared; normally month and year.
 - **Code** – a code should be given at the top of the first page. This will have to be coordinated with the RAMP team.
 - **Graphics** – each fact sheet should have at least one drawing, photograph, chart or some other visual which helps explain the subject and to make the fact sheet more interesting.
 - **Layout and paper** –the layout for all the fact sheets should be uniform. The layout should be interesting and professional looking. The layout should not be too fancy or complex which can detract from the fact sheet message. The paper stock should be heavier than copy paper and of higher quality. A RAMP consultant will develop a template for fact sheets, including the type of paper to use, for the job order contractors to use.

- g. Actions to be Taken by RAMP** – The head of the RAMP Agricultural Technology and Market Development component will be responsible for this communication support task. The RAMP job order task officers will serve as the direct liaison with the contractors and monitor what is being done. The RAMP Communication Support Unit will provide assistance as needed and help identify communications expertise the contractors may use. To help the concerned job order contractors, the RAMP team will do the following:
- **Provide guidelines to appropriate job order contractors** – using the information given above, guidelines for job order contractors will be prepared to be given to all the appropriate contractors.
 - **The guidelines need to be translated** – the guidelines should be translated and shared with job order bidders/contractors and with the MAAH.
 - **Field short term consultant to advise and train contractors** – a short term consultant will be fielded twice during the 2004 project year to develop the fact sheet template and then provide job order contractors advice and training. The consultant will be fielded during the first and third quarters. He/she will be fielded at the same time as the farm demonstration consultant as the two will work together with the job order contractors. This consultant should be Afghan-American with an agriculture background and technical writing skills. He/she will be expected to prepare fact sheets in the local languages. A scope of work will be developed for this consultant.
 - **Develop fact sheet template and layout for contractors to use** – the consultant will develop a template containing guidelines on the type of information needed and a recommended layout for the fact sheet. This will be provided to the job order contractors.
 - **Monitor contractors' production and use of fact sheets** – the job order task officers will monitor and evaluate the contractor in producing and using the best practices fact sheets.
 - **Collect all fact sheets and disseminate to others** – the job order contractors will be responsible to providing RAMP electronic and hard copies of all best practices fact sheets. The RAMP library/information clearinghouse will collect and catalog all the fact sheets, post them to the RAMP internet site, and working with the technical teams determine what other groups should receive copies of the fact sheets for their use.
- h. Task #3 Target for 2004 Project Year** -- The target is to have 30 best practices fact sheets produced by the end of 2004.

8. Task #4 – Better Understanding Farmers and Key Stakeholder Groups

Working with the job order contractors and their field staffs will present an opportunity for RAMP to gather information on farmers and key stakeholder groups related to their adoption processes. This communication support task describes how to collect and use information on knowledge levels of best practices, attitudes towards them, and what actual practices farmers are currently using and why. This is called KAP (knowledge, attitude and practice) information. It is useful to gather this type of information for the recommended best practices from farmers and key stakeholder groups such as input dealers and their salesmen, market buyers and maybe others such as extension workers. This communication support task also recommends gathering information from farmers on how they seek information and what groups are most influential on their adopting new practices.

- a. **Why Important** – Farmers are generally very good at assessing risks when deciding to adopt a new practice or not. They cannot afford a failure as it could affect the livelihood of their families. If the job order contractors are to be successful in diffusing best practices to farmers they must understand how farmers think and how they make decisions on adopting new practices.

The KAP analysis is a way to monitor the diffusion/adoption phases – which are (1) awareness, (2) interest and information seeking, (3) trial, and (4) adoption. The knowledge level fits the awareness phase. If a farmer has not heard of a best practice it is certain he wouldn't adopt it. At this awareness phase mass media is often effective for informing farmers about a practice. Understanding attitudes is important for the information seeking and trial phases. If a farmer has a positive attitude towards a practice, then he will probably proceed through to the adoption phase. The practice measurement lets you know when a farmer does actually adopt a best practice and it is useful to try and find out why the farmer adopted the practice. As a farmer moves from the awareness phase towards adoption then interpersonal (face-to-face) communications become much more important. Farmers will consult with neighbors, input dealers, family members and other groups they respect to seek information and advice.

The KAP information gathered from farmers is important to guide the communication program directed at farmers and deciding what channels of communication to use. Since the later stages of the adoption process relies on interpersonal communication it is important to find out who these influential groups are. Therefore, the second part of information gathering from farmers is to find out where they get their information and what groups influence their decision making process. Once that is known then the job order contractors should work with those influential groups providing them information on the best practices and encouraging them to communicate it to farmers. These influential groups are often input dealers, market buyers, school teachers, etc.

When working with the influential groups, it can also be helpful to measure their KAP on a best practice. This can guide the communication activities directed towards these influential groups.

- b. Target Groups** – Information should be gathered by the job order contractors from:
- **Farmers** – these are the farmers who are targeted for the recommended best practices. KAP and information seeking patterns information should be gathered from them.
 - **Influential Groups** – the information seeking patterns data gathered from farmers should identify who are the groups that they respect and will follow their advice – those who influence farmers’ adoption of new practices. Once these influential groups are identified they should be engaged in the communication program directed towards farmers. It can be very helpful to begin that process by gathering KAP information on these influential groups. They must be knowledgeable about the best practices and believe they are good before these people are going to recommend them to farmers.
- c. Guidelines on How to Collect the Information** – in the case of the RAMP job orders, we are not recommending or requesting that contractors conduct large complicated KAP and information seeking studies. The purpose of this communication support task is to help the contractors better understand farmers and key stakeholder groups so that their communications activities are most effective. Effective communication is a two-way process. Therefore, we are recommending the first step be to listen to farmers and the stakeholders. The more we understand about them the better we can design and implement our communication program. The following are ways to gather information from these groups. The job order contractors can use one or more of these methods for gathering information from farmers and key stakeholder groups.
- **Survey** – a simple questionnaire can be designed (maybe with 10-15 questions) and given to the job order contractor field teams to interview farmers. The number of farmers need not be large – maybe 30-50 total. You may want to do the interviews in different regions to make sure their KAP and information seeking patterns are similar. The questionnaires should be summarized and program planning sessions be held with the participating field staff so they can share additional information and insights they gained from the interviews. The surveys need to be summarized in a report for use by the job order team and for giving to the RAMP team, who will share the information with other groups.
 - **Focus groups** – this approach can be done by bringing 6-10 farmers together in a meeting and asking them questions. They should be encouraged to also interact asking each other questions. A person on the contractor team needs to record the KAP and information seeking information. Focus groups are also good for getting their recommendations on how to communicate with other farmers. It is recommended that several focus group sessions be held with different farmers to ensure that the information does apply to farmers in general. Reports need to be prepared summarizing the KAP and information seeking findings of the focus groups and recommendations they made in communicating to other farmers. This report should be used by the job order team and given to RAMP to share with other groups.
 - **Informal interactions and recording responses** – as part of designing and implementing the program job order contractor team members will have contacts with farmers and key stakeholder groups. The survey and focus group guidelines should be given to the team members so they know what types of information to gather. The team members should record the responses they get from the farmers and stakeholder groups. One person on the team should collect these notes and put them into a report for the team to use and to provide to RAMP.

d. The Types of Information to Collect – This section describes the types of questions that can be developed and used for gather KAP and information seeking information from farmers and key stakeholder groups. You should not use all these questions, but to select from the list and adapt to your situation. Obviously the exact questions will vary according to the best practice being recommended. Therefore, the questions below are examples that need to be adapted to the specific practice and audience group. For these example questions, gathering information on Variety X is used.

- **Knowledge level** – the following are types of questions that can be asked to learn more about the knowledge level of a best practice:
 - i. Have you heard about Variety X?
 - ii. Do you know if any of your neighbors are using Variety X?
 - iii. What variety are you currently using?
 - iv. What varieties are your neighbors currently using?
 - v. What variety do you think is best?
- **Attitude level** – the following are some examples of questions you can ask to assess their attitudes towards a best practice. This assumes they have knowledge or are aware of the recommended practice, but have not adopted it:
 - i. Are you interesting in using Variety X on your farm? If not, why? If yes, why?
 - ii. Have you talked to your neighbors who are using Variety X?
 - iii. Do you think Variety X would give you higher yields?
 - iv. Do you think it is harder to grow Variety X?
 - v. Is the cost of the Variety X seed a problem?
 - vi. Do you think there is a market for Variety X?
- **Practice level** – this is the third level of questions assuming they are aware of the practice and have a positive attitude towards it:
 - i. Are you planting Variety X on your farm? If no, why aren't you planting it? If yes, what was the main reason you decided to plant Variety X?
 - ii. Are you happy with Variety X? If yes, explain why? If no, explain why?
 - iii. Would you recommend Variety X to your neighbors?
- **Information seeking patterns and identifying influential groups** –
 - i. Where did you first learn about Variety X?
 - ___another farmer/neighbor
 - ___seed dealer
 - ___other input dealer, who _____
 - ___market buyer
 - ___radio
 - ___extension agent
 - ___teacher
 - ___other, who _____
 - ii. Of these different people you heard about Variety X, who do you feel was the most important source of the information and the one you believed the most?
 - iii. Did you ask others for more information about Variety X? If yes, who?
 - iv. When you have a problem on your farm or with a crop, who do you ask for advice and information?
 - v. What neighbors do you think are the best farmers?
 - vi. Do you follow the advice input dealers (seed, fertilizer, chemicals, etc.) provide to you when you buy their products? If not, why? If yes, do you find their advice correct and helpful to you?

- vii. If a neighbor asked you a farming question which you don't know the answer, who would you recommend he should talk to?
 - **Interviewing key stakeholder groups** – the KAP questions need to be adjusted for specific stakeholder groups and how they interact with farmers. The main thing is to find out if they are aware of the practice, if they have a positive attitude towards it, and if they would recommend the practice to farmers. You need to also assess if they understand the practice well enough to be able to promote it to farmers and be able to explain to farmers how to use the practice.
- e. **How the Information Can be Used** – The information gathered from farmers and key stakeholder groups can be used by the job order contractors and others in several ways:
 - **Serve as a baseline for measuring progress** – KAP studies often are done at the beginning of a project so that baseline data can be collected. After a year or an appropriate time the communication program has been operating a follow up KAP study is conducted. The changes in KAP will give you an indication if progress is being made in diffusing the best practices or if you need to redesign your communication program.
 - **Determining what messages farmers need and want** – the information gathered from the above questions can give you guidance on what to communicate to farmers. If they are unaware of a practice, then you need to explain what it is and what benefits they would receive by using the practice. If they are aware and have a positive attitude towards it then your messages should be more on how to use the practice. If you find out why they are not adopting the practice, then you can focus on correctly any misunderstandings.
 - **Designing your extension/communication program** – the KAP information will tell you what stage the farmers are in the adoption process which will help in identifying channels of communication – radio, field days, interpersonal communication, etc. The information seeking patterns findings will guide you on what influential groups to involve in your communication program.
 - **Determining how to enlist influential groups in the communication program** – the KAP information gathered from the key stakeholder group(s) should be very valuable for helping you to enlist these influential groups. It will also guide you on what types of information they need so that they can effectively communicate correct messages to farmers.
- f. **Actions to be Taken by RAMP** –. The head of the RAMP Agricultural Technology and Market Development component will be responsible for this communication support task. The job order task officers will monitor how the contractors use the guidelines. The Communication Support Unit will use the information coming from the contractors for reporting to USAID and other groups. The reports will be included in the RAMP library/information clearinghouse. For implementing this communication support task the RAMP team should do the following:
 - **Prepare guidelines for job order contractors to use** – using the information contained in this section, guidelines will be produced and distributed to appropriate job order contractors.
 - **Translate the guidelines** – the translated guidelines should be given to job order contractors to give their field teams. They should also be given to MAAH and other groups involved in working with farmers and local influential groups.

- **Field an audience research specialist to advise and train contractors** – an audience research consultant should be fielded twice during 2004. The assignments will be during the second and fourth quarters. In both assignments he/she will work with the appropriate job order contractors providing guidance and training to them for preparing questionnaires, collecting data, how to analyze the data and how to use the findings for designing their communication programs. The second visit the audience research specialist will also study the reports received from contractors and prepare summary reports for dissemination to the RAMP team, contractors, USAID, MAAH, and other groups. A scope of work will be developed for this consultant.
 - **Monitor and evaluate what information contractors are collecting and how they are using it** – the job order task officers should monitor how the contractors use these guidelines, what information they are collecting and how it is used. If problems are detected, guidance should be provided to the contractors.
 - **Collect findings from contractors, summarize and disseminate to others** – the task officers should also ensure that all reports prepared by the contractors are collected and shared with the RAMP team and USAID, and put into the library/information clearinghouse for further dissemination. In some cases the findings can be used by the RAMP Communication Support Unit for reporting progress being made by the project or for developing stories about Afghanistan agriculture.
- g. Task #4 Target for 2004 Project Year** – The target is to have findings on KAP and information seeking patterns from 5 job order contractors by the fourth quarter. The audience research consultant will be fielded to analyze the findings and prepare a revised plan for further collection of this type of information the following year, including follow up KAP studies to measure progress. He/she will also summarize the findings and disseminate it to the RAMP team, concerned contractors, USAID, MAAH and other stakeholder groups

9. Oversight Program Support Communication Program

This “Assessment of RAMP Technology Diffusion Program” is intended to be a roadmap for job order contractors providing practical guidelines for them to use. The four communication support tasks are a starting point. To be successful, the RAMP team will have to ensure the appropriate job order contractors actually use the guidelines provided to them. After these four tasks are underway, then a review of this Assessment is needed to refine the tasks to make them more effective and to identify new communication support tasks that need to be designed and implemented. This review scheduled for the second quarter 2004 will address creating new communication support tasks for the project focus II of the RAMP implementation as described in the RAMP strategy paper and work plan.

- a. Oversight of job order contractors** – As indicated above in each task, the head of the RAMP Agricultural Technology and Market Development component will be responsible for the farmer demonstrations, packaging best practices and audience information gathering tasks. The long-term Agribusiness Advisor will provide the leadership for the market price information task. The job order task officers will monitor and evaluate what the contractors do in implementing these communication support tasks and, where needed, to provide additional guidance to them. Short term consultants will be fielded to

further develop the guidelines and to advise and train job order contractor staffs. The RAMP Communication Support unit will help the contractors with the production of communication materials and programs; and will collect information on progress being made to be reported to USAID and others.

- b. Updating the Assessment report** – It is recommended that during the second quarter of 2004 the Agricultural Communication Strategist be fielded again to review how the four communication support tasks are being implemented by the job order contractors. This will involve working with the RAMP and contractor teams. As appropriate, site visits will be made to see first hand how the tasks are being implemented. Based upon this information, the consultant will make adjustments to the Assessment report and guidelines given to the contractors. The consultant will also work with the RAMP team and USAID to identify new communication support tasks that need to be designed and implemented during the coming year. By the second quarter the project focus II of the RAMP program should be under development and communication support tasks need to be designed to support this new project focus. The consultant will develop the new tasks and provide recommendations how they should be implemented. A scope of work will be prepared for this consultancy.